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Senate

The Senate met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. You laid the Earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths. Each day, we receive the showers of Your blessings. Thank You for listening to our prayers and for keeping us safe. Thank You for giving us hope even when life seems covered by shadows.

Lord, continue to sustain our Senators. Give them wisdom and courage to do their duty. Keep them humble, and help them to trust You completely.

We pray in Your matchless Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, December 14, 2022.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable BEN RAY LUJÁN, a Senator from the State of New Mexico, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. LUJÁN thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RESERVATION OF LEADERSHIP TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Morning business is closed.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to the consideration of S.J. Res. 60, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S.J. Res. 60) providing for congressional disapproval under chapter 8 of title 5, United States Code, of the rule submitted by the Department of Education relating to "Final Priorities, Requirements, Definitions, and Selection Criteria-Expanding Opportunity Through Quality Charter Schools Program (CSP)—Grants to State Entities (State Entity Grants); Grants to Charter Management Organizations for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools (CMO Grants); and Grants to Charter School Developers for the Opening of New Charter Schools and for the Replication and Expansion of High-Quality Charter Schools (Developer Grants)".

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR—S. 5244

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, first, I understand that there is a bill at the desk that is due for a second reading.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The leader is correct.

The clerk will read the bill by title for the second time.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 5244) making continuing appropriations for fiscal year 2023, extending various health programs, and for other purposes.

Mr. SCHUMER. In order to place the bill on the calendar under the provisions of rule XIV, I would object to further proceedings.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection having been heard, the bill will be placed on the calendar.

PROVIDING FOR CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL UNDER CHAPTER 8 OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, OF THE RULE SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION—Continued

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, last night, Chairman LEAHY, Ranking Member SHELBY, and Chairman DELAURO announced that the appropriators have agreed to a framework for an omnibus agreement that will fully fund the Federal Government in fiscal year 2023. This is welcome and important news. Congress now has a roadmap for funding the government before the conclusion of the 117th Congress—something the large majority of us want to see. We still have a long way to go, but a framework is a big step in the right direction.

A yearlong omnibus is by far the best option we have for making sure our kids, our senior citizens, our veterans, our small businesses, our military members, our defense, and all of the families who benefit from this don't

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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see vital government services lapse or shrink. It means we can fully implement the investments secured. We fought so hard for the PACT Act; we have to fund it. We fought so hard for the CHIPS and Science Act; we have to fund it. A CR will not fund these bills, but an omnibus agreement will. And they were all bipartisan, with large support from both sides of the aisle.

An omnibus bill is also a balanced approach because it will contain wins that both sides want to see, like the Electoral Count Act and funding for our friends in Ukraine. If we can come to an agreement on an omnibus, I am optimistic that these bills, which are so important to Democrats and Republicans alike—the ECA and funding for Ukraine—can become law.

But before we pass a funding bill, we also must ensure the government doesn't first shut down, so we are going to have to pass a 1-week continuing resolution ASAP. The House is set to act on a 1-week CR as soon as tonight, and when that bill comes to the Senate, we should be ready to act quickly, as soon as tomorrow if we can.

The appropriations process, of course, is not over. So the responsible and prudent thing to do right now is to pass a 1-week CR quickly, without the unwelcome brouhaha that has provoked shutdowns in the past.

And, remember, as we go through this appropriations process, the experiences of the last decades show that those who risk shutdowns in order to make political points always lose in the end.

NANCY PELOSI

Mr. President, now, on Speaker PELOSI, later this afternoon, I will have the honor—the bittersweet honor—of joining with congressional leaders, past and present, to unveil the official portrait of my dear friend and a great leader, Speaker NANCY PELOSI. Every year, millions come to the Capitol to learn about our democracy and to put a face to the names of history. They walk these halls and see the portraits of Speakers from ages past—Sam Rayburn, Tip O'Neill, and so many others. But after today—after today—the faces of those male leaders will forever be joined by Madam Speaker.

So today is a happy day to celebrate an amazing public servant who had an amazing career. But it is also a chance to say thank you to a dear friend and a beloved colleague.

Leader to leader, I will always admire Speaker PELOSI for an important quality that has set her apart: She always keeps her caucus united behind a common goal. She keeps repeating over and over again, and has for 20 years: Our unity is our strength. That is what she always has said. I have and will continue to repeat the same to my caucus.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Today is December 14. The Senate Republicans have spent months—literally months—begging our Democratic colleagues to stop fiddling with partisan nonsense and focus on two core things: the NDAA and government funding.

I have been talking about the need for a strong National Defense Authorization Act all year long—all year long. I am glad we are finally going to wrap up the basic governing duty that we have in the next few days.

With respect to government funding, I was glad to hear Senator SHELBY announce yesterday evening that negotiators have reached a bipartisan, bicameral framework for a full-year government funding bill.

Long-term continuing resolutions cheat our Armed Forces out of the resources and the certainty that our commanders and civilian leaders need to keep modernizing our forces, investing in crucial weapons, and outcompeting adversaries such as China.

I am glad that our Democratic colleagues finally accepted reality and conceded to the Republican position that we need to prioritize our national security.

Republicans simply were not going to lavish extra liberal spending on the Commander in Chief's own party as a reward for adequately funding our national defense. It simply wasn't going to happen. Funding defense is a basic, bipartisan duty of our government, not something that earns Democrats special treats.

As Senator SHELBY stated last night, this framework agreement doesn't mean the hard work is over; it means the hard work can finally start. It will take seriousness and good faith on both sides to produce actual legislation that follows the framework.

Poison pills, especially far-left demands to overturn longstanding and commonsense policy riders will need to stay away from the process. And even then, the calendar will still make this a challenging sprint. Our side has made it clear that the Senate has until December 22 to complete either a full-year funding bill or a short-term CR into early next year. That is the deadline, and those are the two options.

If a truly bipartisan full-year bill without poison pills is ready for final Senate passage by late next week, then I will support it, for our Armed Forces particularly. Otherwise, we will be passing a short-term continuing resolution into the new year.

INFLATION

Mr. President, now on a different matter, against the backdrop of punishing 13.8 percent cumulative inflation since January 2021, an open borders crisis, spiking deaths from drug overdoses, and surging violent crime from coast to coast, President Biden has decided that his A-1 priority needs to be—listen to this—cracking down on charter schools and harming the edu-

cational opportunities available to millions of low-income students in the process.

Charter schools have long injected a huge dose of choice and competition into the schooling options available to low-income Americans and communities of color. This became especially true and especially important back during the pandemic.

Big Labor teachers unions spent the entire pandemic forcing government-run public schools to keep their doors shut long after private schools, parochial schools, and schools across Europe were all back operating safely in person.

Charter schools became a haven. They offered an escape rope out of the learning loss for kids who would otherwise have been left behind. No wonder that, according to one analysis, charter school enrollment has surged since the pandemic started, even as public school enrollments have fallen off.

But, sadly, whenever kids' best interests and Big Labor's pocketbooks come into conflict, we know where most of today's Democratic Party will come down. The Biden administration has dutifully written a harsh new regulation that would intentionally chip away at the Federal charter schools program and strip funding from many public charter schools. President Biden and his team are trying to force charter schools to conform to a whole new set of top-down, one-size-fits-all rules that the teachers unions want to be forced onto their competitors.

The Democrats' rule is designed to hamstring charter schools and leave them more reliant on government bureaucracies in everything from what they teach to how kids get to school in the morning. Perhaps worst of all, they want charter schools' Federal funding to be heavily contingent on whether the Democrats' Federal bureaucracy agrees there is a "need" for their existence.

This is a plan to take options away from parents, to take opportunities away from kids, to take choice away from families, and to transfer that power directly to Big Labor bosses and Big Government bureaucrats—yet another example of Democrats' trying every trick to make end-runs around parents' rights in education, stripping power away from parents, and handing it over to the bureaucrats.

So I want to commend the Senator from South Carolina, Senator TIM SCOTT, for bringing forward a Congressional Review Act resolution to right this wrong. I would urge every Member of the Senate to put families first and vote for Senator SCOTT's commonsense resolution.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY
SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Mr. President, many of us in Connecticut and throughout the Nation awoke today with a heavy heart, with grief still so raw that we could almost touch it.

I wish I could tell you that 10 years ago to this day was a blur. I wish I could tell you that the memory of that day has dimmed. I wish I could tell you that the knife-like sorrow and pain has subsided. But the fact is, it is still raw and real for so many of us in Connecticut, this day 10 years ago.

My mind goes back to the horrors of this day, and I think that reliving it reminds us of the need to honor those 26 lives with action. It is still searingly and scarily vivid—the voices, the faces, the unforgettable moments of that tragedy, as we stood at the firehouse in Sandy Hook and saw parents and loved ones emerge after learning that their children or loved ones—beautiful babies and great educators—would not be coming home that night; parents with their faces frozen in shock and sorrow, struggling through tears; police and first responders bent with disbelief and grief; townspeople, loved ones feeling helpless and hopeless.

And at the wakes and funerals that followed, what we saw was a town and a State that rallied together—but still the searing sorrow of those losses and also the determination that was expressed that night at St. Rose of Lima Church to turn that grief and sorrow into something positive.

As I recall very vividly, at one of the wakes, I approached a mom who had just lost her child and said: When you are ready, I would like to talk about what we can do to stop this kind of gun violence. And she looked at me through her tears and said: I am ready. I am ready now.

That is the spirit that Sandy Hook and Newtown brought to the world as the world watched them. And many of them, not all, but many turned that grief and loss into advocacy. They came here to the Capitol. They asked us to do something about gun violence. They spoke to colleagues. They crusaded. They sought to improve the background check system that all too often allows people who are dangerous to have weapons, people who should be separated from their guns or prevented from having them in the first place.

And they were in this Gallery, many of them, when the vote on that background check bill failed. It received 60 votes, but it failed—it received less than 60 votes, so it failed. It received a majority but not the 60 votes that it needed.

And from the Gallery I heard then and I still feel that it echoes in this Chamber: Shame. Shame on you.

And, indeed, shame on us for the 10 years afterward when no action came from this body.

In the last decade, they have continued that crusade. They have helped to form a movement. They have been joined by tens of thousands of others in a movement to change the law, to turn that trauma and loss into positive social change and reform, and they have helped create a movement—organizations like Giffords and Newtown Action Alliance, Sandy Hook Promise, Moms Demand Action, Students Demand Action, the Newtown Action Alliance, Connecticut Against Gun Violence, many of them coming here and working year after year.

That episode and others like it—the scourge of gun violence—have given rise to that movement.

And through that decade, literally 41,000 Americans have died every year. One million Americans in total have been shot. Gun violence is now the leading cause of death among American children and teens. Every day, eight children and teens are unintentionally or accidentally injured or killed due to an unlocked or unsupervised gun.

But the survivors and the loved ones have become the difference makers, and they have been joined by law enforcement and parents, teachers, medical professionals, activists and advocates who have said to us: Enough is enough. And their determination and courage, their conviction, that momentum has created a different trajectory, a different climate of opinion in this country so that now a majority of Americans want commonsense, sensible controls on gun violence.

So the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act was not an accident of history; it was the culmination of a movement that is still growing and spreading in its influence and impact.

And there is no minimizing the importance of the measure that we passed with strong bipartisan support last August. It improves the background system. It closes the boyfriend loophole. It helps stop gun trafficking. It adopts the concept of red flag statutes, intervention in crisis, separating people from guns when they are going to kill themselves or others or at least tell people they are going to do it.

And that red flag or emergency risk protection order movement is one that we in Connecticut initiated. We were the first to pass that statute. And I have worked with Senator GRAHAM and others in bipartisan expansion of that proposal, and it is already helping to save lives. In Florida, it has saved countless lives, in Connecticut—in the 19 States where there are red flag statutes. And the act as a whole is helping to save lives.

As my colleague Senator MURPHY, who will speak shortly, has said, the reforms on the background check system alone have helped to save lives, and I credit him with his leadership in passing that measure.

And yet—and yet—the deaths continue. We know that that measure was

not the single solution or the panacea that will solve the problem of gun violence, the scourge, the epidemic of gun violence deaths in this country.

We have broken the grip of the gun lobby. The NRA is a shadow of itself, and we have a movement that is growing in importance and impact, but there is so much more to be done in the law. We need Ethan's Law, safe storage, such as we have done in Connecticut, strengthened red flag and emergency risk protection order statutes, better background check systems to make them more complete and better enforceable, and, yes, ban on assault weapons, high-capacity magazines, ghost guns, which are the scourge of law enforcement.

And so I say to the advocates and activists who are continuing this movement: We will continue that work. We will honor with action the lives which are lost not only in Sandy Hook but all around this country, day after day, in drive-by shootings, in crimes, and criminal assaults in domestic violence.

Just in this past month, a brave young woman, Julie Minogue, was lost in Connecticut to domestic violence, where a protective order should have helped to save her life.

And we owe our police more support and resources to enforce those protective orders and to take action against gun violence. They are unsung heroes. And in the wake of Sandy Hook, many of them experienced trauma and mental health challenges that still linger with them. On this day, we should remember and commemorate and celebrate the service of our police and, yes, our teachers who also, every day, have to do the drills and experience the fear and apprehension for themselves and their students.

They are also unsung heroes of Sandy Hook and afterward; and parents who have to explain why they have that apprehension and why their children have to prepare for those drills; our medical professionals in the emergency room who see this trauma and the death and injury day in and day out.

They are doing their jobs. Our teachers are doing their jobs. Our police are doing their jobs. Parents are doing their jobs. Congress is not doing its job. Thank you to them for doing their job. Congress must do its job to strengthen our laws and prevent gun violence.

And there is a new generation of activists and advocates coming along. The young woman who spoke at the vigil last Wednesday night and introduced President Biden—a survivor of Sandy Hook—is just one example; March For Our Lives, emanating from Parkland. All of the young people who are demonstrating that positive energy that is so critically important in advancing this movement, they are showing awe-inspiring hope and grace. Junior Newtown Action Line is another example.

The community of Sandy Hook has responded with dazzling strength and

courage. That community has not only rallied around the loved ones who have experienced unspeakable loss, but they have helped to support the charitable and nonprofits that those families formed in the wake of those losses.

They have truly chosen love, those families. Many of them have established foundations and nonprofits that benefit music, art, education, scholarships for students, animal sanctuaries.

I have worked with the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement, started by Scarlett Lewis; the Sandy Hook Promise organization, started by the Hockley and Barden families; the Catherine Violet Hubbard Foundation; Ben's Lighthouse; the Emilie Parker Art Foundation; the Vicki Soto Memorial Fund, which just a couple of weeks ago had a run in Stratford, a 5K, to benefit the great work that it is doing on scholarships; the Avielle Foundation; and the Ana Grace Project. The list goes on. It is a part of this story because Sandy Hook is the story not only of social change and legal and legislative reform, but it is also an intensely personal story about grace and grit, about courage and strength, and about a personal dedication to making good come out of the unimaginable horror and evil on that day.

Sandy Hook in Connecticut is also the story about peacekeepers—a new generation of peacekeepers, young people who are dedicated in Hartford through the Compass Youth Collaborative, graduates of the Brother Carl Hardrick Institute, who are determined to try to prevent violence and reach out to others of their age and stop gun violence before it begins by enlisting others in peacekeeping and intervention.

That is also the result of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, because the investment of \$15 billion in mental health and crisis intervention and community organization is, at the end of the day, a critical part of stopping gun violence.

The survivors club, as someone has said, is one that no one wants to join. This survivors club of gun violence is a network that no one wants to be a part of personally. And yet, as long as the violence continues, there will be survivors and loved ones, like the great and graceful families of Sandy Hook.

As our heart goes out to them on this day, we should keep in mind and in our hearts the need to honor with action—continuing action. They are doing their job. Police, teachers, medical professionals, parents, all of the professionals are doing their jobs. Congress must do its job. The time is for action—more action now.

I yield the floor to my colleague from Connecticut, who has been such a champion in this effort, Senator MURPHY.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Connecticut.

Mr. MURPHY. Mr. President, Jimmy Greene and his wife Nelba lost a daughter in Sandy Hook. Jimmy said this,

leading up to the 10-year mark of the shooting in Newtown that we are commemorating today:

There is a saying in our culture that “time heals all wounds,” but I wouldn’t say that is true in my case.

Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have been down here on December 14 for 9 years in a row. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have given hundreds of speeches on this floor in the intervening days and months, in between those anniversaries, talking about what happened in Sandy Hook and trying to compel our colleagues to action. But there is nothing that we can say that explains through words the feeling of cataclysmic loss when you lose a child—a 6-year-old or a 7-year-old or an 18-year-old or a 19-year-old.

Senator BLUMENTHAL and I were there at the firehouse in Sandy Hook that day. There are a lot of days when I wish I hadn’t heard and seen the things that I saw and heard that day. But we were voyeurs. We were interlopers. There is no way that we can understand what those families are going through today, as the pain still feels, for many, as acute as it did 10 years ago.

So Senator BLUMENTHAL and I think it is important to come down here and honor the memory of those children and those six educators every year on December 14. But I also know that there is nothing that I can do with words to explain to you how different the community of Sandy Hook is and how those lives will never, ever be the same.

I guess I come to this day every year with two emotions. One is of just deep sorrow, just to think about who those kids were going to become. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I have gotten to learn so much about these kids. I know more about those 20 6-year-old kids than I probably know about any other set of 6-year-old kids other than my own when they were that age over the course of my lifetime, and I love those kids. I see the genius in them. They were already doing such miraculous things, showing such kindness and such talent. And to think that those kids today would be preparing for college, deciding where they wanted to open up their next chapter, to think of what has been stolen from this world.

My sorrow is also due to the fact that, well, this Nation is different today than it was before Sandy Hook. The country now compels us to action. There are groups all over the country dedicated to trying to change the laws of this country to make a Sandy Hook less likely.

This was all happening before Sandy Hook. Sandy Hook was the first shooting of little kids in a school of this size. But a few weeks after Sandy Hook happened, Senator BLUMENTHAL and I went to do a community meeting in the north end of Hartford, and there we met parents of children who had been killed on the streets of Hartford who were furious, and even more furious

after Sandy Hook. They told us: Nobody can relate to those families in Sandy Hook more than we can. We lost children just like they lost children, but why did this country wait until Sandy Hook to open their eyes to the epidemic of gun violence that exists every single day, whether or not it hits the headlines?

So my sorrow today is for what we lost 10 years ago today, for the genius and the talent that was extinguished from this Earth—those kids and those educators, those teachers. But also my sorrow today is for the fact that it took Sandy Hook to wake this country up to what had been happening in front of us every single day.

And to really understand the gravity of Sandy Hook, you can’t just think about those kids. That is the worst part of this, by leaps and bounds. But there are survivors. There are children who witnessed those shootings. There are family members who experienced deep trauma. There are first responders who will never be the same after having to sort through that carnage.

Sandy Hook is a window into the particular grief that comes with losing someone to gun violence, especially someone young, but also the broad sweeping trauma that comes with a shooting of 20 or 1.

That is the important thing to understand today, as well—that our love needs to go to those families, first and foremost, but also to the community of Newtown. But so must it go to the broader experience of gun violence.

I live in Hartford, CT. I live in the South End of Hartford, a neighborhood adjacent to the South End of Hartford. I hear every night the sirens and police cars and ambulances whizzing by my house. I went to a middle school—actually, to a K–8 school. I met with middle schoolers at this school just down the street from my home a few weeks ago, just to kind of talk to these kids about what they wanted to change about the neighborhood we live in.

Do you know what they wanted to talk to me about? They wanted to talk to me about their walk to and from school. They wanted to talk to me about how dangerous it is for them to walk from their house to the school that they go to and how every single day they are experiencing a trauma that many people who grow up in the suburbs or rural areas of this country will never experience once in their life. But these kids experience it every single day.

That is the true story of American gun violence, not just those who lose their lives but this much bigger universe of millions of individuals who experienced trauma either through the loss, through the firsthand experience of gun violence, or through the daily threat of gun violence.

And so my pain is for what we lost that day. My pain is for the delayed reaction of this country in waking up to this epidemic. My pain is for the broader community of kids and individuals

who have to live with the consequences of our inaction.

But I just simply want to underscore something Senator BLUMENTHAL said as well. I also come to this day with a lot of joy, a lot of joy for what we have found that lies inside each of us. Out of Sandy Hook came kindness and grace. Senator BLUMENTHAL rattled off a list of not-for-profit organizations, charitable causes that have sprung forth from those families in Sandy Hook; the amount of money that has been raised to try to make people's lives better in big ways and small ways. I come to this day with a lot of gratitude for the community of Sandy Hook for deciding to take that awful tragedy and turning it into something wonderful.

There are small, little charities that started out of Sandy Hook based upon the passions of those kids—kids who loved art or who loved animals. There are now charitable organizations that give more kids—especially more underserved kids—access to art and experience with animals. There are big organizations that are seeking to change the culture of schools to make sure that you don't have situations in which individuals who are going through mental illness or trauma find themselves isolated and ostracized in the way that many mass shooters become.

So there is so much important work that is happening based off of that loss. I have joy for that. I do. I do.

I also have gratitude for all the people who have stepped up and have been part of this movement to change the laws of this country.

I get it that people didn't see results here for 10 years until this summer. But Senator BLUMENTHAL and I and others, and Senator DURBIN, who have been working on this issue for a decade, we saw that small but meaningful progress every single year. Every single year, a couple more partners, especially on the Republican side, were willing to talk to us about change.

All of a sudden, it became a little bit more likely that we would finally pass something. Then, finally, this summer, almost 10 years to the day of the tragedy at Sandy Hook, we passed the most significant anti-gun violence measure in Congress in 30 years.

I got a briefing from the Department of Justice, as did Senator TILLIS and Senator CORNYN, just a few weeks ago, and we were shown evidence that this law that we passed collectively was already saving lives. We were given cases in which individuals who would have gotten a gun, who were in crisis, who were contemplating violence did not get a gun because of the law that we passed together. What we have done isn't enough, and it doesn't absolve us of the responsibility to do more, but it is saving lives.

This day, for me, comes with gratitude and joy for all of the people all across this country, especially those people in Newtown who decided to be part of this movement which allowed us to pass legislation this summer,

which is, as we speak, saving lives all around this country.

My sorrow and my joy that I bring to this day, you know, is through my perspective as the Representative of Newtown. I was the Congressman for Newtown for 6 years. I had just been elected to the Senate about a month prior when Sandy Hook happened.

It is also due to my perspective as a parent. My kids are amongst this generation that has grown up knowing nothing except for the threat of a mass shooting. I will never forget my kindergarten, who is now a fifth grader, coming home and telling me about his first active shooter drill. He didn't exactly know what it was, right? He was 5 years old.

He said: Dad, my teacher told us all to go to the bathroom today—all of us, all 26 of us. She packed us into the bathroom.

He described the fact that they were standing in the bathroom, all tight together like sardines, and he said: She told us we were practicing for what would happen if a bad man came into our building, and she told us to stay there and be quiet for as long as we could.

He didn't really know what it was, but he knew enough to say to me this: Daddy, I didn't like it.

My older son texted a few weeks ago to tell us that his school was in a lockdown because of a shooting outside. For 2 hours, those kids sat in that school until they were released. I mean, my kids, I think, are proud of the fact that their dad comes to work every day and tries to solve this epidemic, but there is no way to really calculate what this generation of kids is losing every single day by living in fear.

I think what we did this summer really helped, though. I say that honestly. Some people say it is not enough; that you have to go further. But what we communicated this summer to those kids and the parents is that we care. Our answer isn't nothing, right?

As much as I experience this as a father, I also know that we have made progress and that that progress has been logistical and practical but that it has also been metaphysical; it has been emotional. What we did this summer just gave the kids of this country and the parents of this country a little bit of a feeling that we are going to be there for them and, hopefully, more in the future.

So I am grateful to be on the floor with my colleague today in commemorating everything that we lost at Sandy Hook and in thanking the community members of Sandy Hook for standing up and showing the world the best part of that community.

I am grateful to my colleagues this year for turning a page, for turning a corner in our obligation to keep our kids safe. Senator BLUMENTHAL and I will be here for the 11th anniversary and the 12th and the 13th and, hope-

fully, we will have more progress to discuss and we will have more positive change brought to this country by the families of Sandy Hook.

Robbie Parker and his wife lost their little daughter, Emilie. Emilie was so cute. She was 6 years old when she died.

Robbie said this: We have learned how to hold on to two things. We can enjoy the things that make us happy—Robbie says about his family, the Parkers—and we can also carry the pain of losing someone and the sorrow that comes with that.

It is OK to feel both things today. It is OK to feel pain for what happened at Sandy Hook, but don't let that consume you, because the Parkers aren't letting it consume them.

Jimmy Greene will tell you that time has not healed his wounds, but I know Nelba and Jimmy. I know that they bring a lot of joy every day.

So feel pain today; feel sorrow; think about those families, but, man, bring some life and some grace. Make a decision that, in your world, you are going to honor those kids' and those adults' memories with some action because, I guess, that is what I think about most today. I am sad for what we have lost, but I am also inspired and hopeful for all of the grace and the kindness that has grown out of this tragedy.

I also realize that, maybe more than anything else today, we should recognize that nothing in our lives that we love should be taken for granted. It can all disappear in an instant. So show that daily grace and kindness that is necessary to communicate to your loved ones, to your friends, to your communities that you don't take them for granted.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELECTORAL COUNT REFORM ACT

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, in 2022, as America approaches its semiquincentennial of the independence of our Nation, the United States of America stands at a crossroads.

Disturbingly, since the January 6 insurrection of our Capitol which sought to block the peaceful transfer of power after a free and fair election, a growing number of Americans believes that violence against government can be justified, according to recently polling. We have witnessed a disturbing rise of threats against law enforcement officials from various domestic violent extremist groups as well as threats and intimidation against public officials, such as school board officials and election workers, who are simply doing their jobs. We must condemn acts of violence from all corners and prosecute

those who seek to harm public officials to the fullest extent of the law.

We also witnessed the rise of election deniers in the 2022 midterm elections who repeated the Big Lie that the 2020 election was stolen and who pledged their loyalty to a particular candidate or ideology instead of the rule of law.

We have seen a rise of violent actions—a rise of anti-Semitism, a rise of hate crimes—and it is very much connected to the assault on our democratic institutions. All of us must be defenders of the democratic institutions, which are the bedrock of America.

As we saw in the 2020 elections, different interpretations of the Electoral Count Act of 1887 can lead down a dangerous path, such as when former President Donald Trump and his enablers attempted to overthrow a free and fair election won by President Joe Biden, leading to the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol. We were there. We were in harm's way. We know exactly how violent that group of insurrectionists was.

President Trump's latest outrage is to talk about suspending the Constitution because he lost the election. Free and fair elections and the peaceful transfer of power are fundamental to who we are as a nation.

For this reason, several months ago, I joined a bipartisan working group of, roughly, 20 Senators to make urgent changes to our Presidential election processes. I am pleased that, in July of 2022, our group reached a bipartisan agreement to modernize the Electoral Count Act, ECA, of 1887 and to make other needed changes to improve the Presidential transition process.

Our bipartisan working group's legislative proposal, the Electoral Count Reform Act, clarifies the appropriate State and Federal roles in selecting the President and Vice President of the United States. It makes it easier for Congress to identify a single, conclusive slate of electors from each State, in part, by requiring States to follow the rules they set before the election when designating their electors.

We reiterate that the Vice President has a purely ceremonial function in the mandatory joint session of Congress to count the electoral votes. This was in direct response to President Trump's pressure campaign against Vice President Mike Pence to throw out the electoral votes from certain States, which enabled and led to the January 6 insurrection and attack on the Capitol.

We also increase the threshold needed to lodge objections against electoral votes to lessen the chance of frivolous objections in the future.

Our legislation also has a strong provision for expedited Federal judicial review to resolve legal challenges more efficiently before the electoral college meets to cast its votes.

I particularly want to thank Senators SUSAN COLLINS and JOE MANCHIN for leading this effort as well as the other working group members: Sen-

ators PORTMAN, SINEMA, ROMNEY, SHAHEEN, MURKOWSKI, WARNER, TILLIS, MURPHY, CAPITO, YOUNG, COONS, and SASSE. This is how the Senate should operate.

Our working group made several additional, useful recommendations as part of the Presidential Transition Improvement Act and Enhanced Election Security and Protection Act. This legislation would strengthen Presidential transitions, improve the U.S. Postal Service's handling of election mail, stiffen criminal penalties for those who threaten or intimidate election officials, and reauthorize the Election Assistance Commission.

The Election Assistance Commission helps administer grants to States and provides the best practices for election officials in various areas, including cyber security, election audits, and voting accessibility.

I am pleased that the Senate Rules Committee promptly held a hearing on our legislative proposal and that our legislation has been endorsed by a broad and diverse coalition of public interest groups.

In particular, I want to thank Chair KLOBUCHAR and Ranking Member BLUNT for making this proposal earlier this year and marking it up in their committee. I am pleased that the Senate Rules and Administration Committee reported out the legislation by an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 14 to 1 in September 2022. The committee made improvements in the legislation—again, that is how the process should work—under the leadership of Senators KLOBUCHAR and BLUNT.

I am also pleased that the legislation has been cosponsored by our leaders, Leader SCHUMER and Leader MCCONNELL.

It is now time for the Senate to act. Our legislation, S. 4573, now has a strong bipartisan mix of 37 cosponsors.

We must enact these reforms this month, before the 118th Congress convenes in 2023. We all know that the Presidential election cycle starts early, and we must make sure that this law is enacted before we start in 2023.

As my dear friend the late Congressman John Lewis said, "Democracy is not a state. It is an act, and each generation must do its part."

I urge every Marylander and American to get involved. Stand up for our democratic system of government and the rule of law.

Congress should act now to make sure that the lawful and rightful winner of the 2024 Presidential election is ultimately certified as the winner by the States and Congress. We cannot fail in this solemn duty to do everything we can to prevent another insurrection like we saw on January 6. We showed how fragile our democracy really is. We have an obligation to defend it together, as we continue our great American experiment with a democratic republic that serves as a beacon of freedom and human rights throughout the world.

With that, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority whip.

REMEMBERING SANDY HOOK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOOTING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, 10 years ago today, when I first heard the news, I couldn't believe it. Then, as I heard the details and learned of what had happened in Connecticut, I thought to myself, This is the moment. This shooting is so outrageous and horrible, this is the moment when finally America will come to grips with the reality of gun violence.

What I am referring to, of course, is the Sandy Hook Elementary School. It was 10 years ago today that 20 beautiful little children and 6 teachers and staff were murdered in a classroom at this grade school. I thought, This was it. All of the gun violence and all the gun deaths notwithstanding, this will do it. It is the tipping point. America will come to the honest reality that gun violence is unacceptable and will do something about it.

Other nations have done something. Other nations have had incidents like this, maybe even fewer victims, and they have decided to change their nation's laws. They have done so, and they made their nation safer because of it.

We are gathering here this morning at the request of Senator CHRIS MURPHY of Connecticut to remember what happened 10 years ago. Senator MURPHY was with the families of Sandy Hook, as was Senator BLUMENTHAL, when they learned of the children's fate.

Can you imagine being the parent of one of these little kids and being asked to wait in a building across the street while they looked at the remains of these children and tried to identify them with their parents? I don't know if I would ever recover from that as a parent or a grandparent.

Senator MURPHY and Senator BLUMENTHAL tried to give the families comfort. I can't imagine that assignment. They both have brought much more than sorrow to this cause. Since that shooting 10 years ago, they have brought a fierce resolve to do something about it and to end the horrific carnage of gun violence in America.

This has been an important year for gun safety in this Congress. After the racism-fueled mass murders at a grocery store in Buffalo, NY, after the slaughter of 19 little children and 2 teachers in their elementary school in Uvalde, TX, Congress passed the most significant gun safety law in 30 years: the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. And the Senate did something that hadn't been done for 7 years: We actually confirmed a Director for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. That is a position the gun lobby had fought to keep open and unfilled for 7 years. We have a man on the job now. So we have made some progress, but we have a lot more to do. The American people want us to do more.

It is hard to say, in this great Nation that we have been blessed to live in, that we are the only—only—Nation on Earth that accepts these horrifying levels of gun violence on a daily basis and mass shootings. A mass shooting is a shooting where at least four and sometimes more people are shot or killed.

Many times, because of the repetition of this horrific conduct, we think it is inevitable, unpreventable, and we in America shrug our shoulders and say: That is what happens in the United States of America. Just in the category of fatal shootings in schools, kindergarten through 12th grade schools, how many fatal shootings have taken place in America in those schools in the 10 years since Sandy Hook? There have been 189—189 school shootings since Sandy Hook in America.

Gun violence is now the leading cause of death of American children. Think about that for a second—the leading cause of death. Every year, more than 3,000 children and teens die by firearms—3,000 a year—another 15,000 are wounded, and more than 3 million American children are exposed to gun violence every year. For many of these kids, the trauma of seeing friends, parents, siblings, classmates shot may result in lifelong damage to their physical, mental, and emotional health. That is what trauma does to the survivors.

This past June, 2 weeks after their 10-year-old daughter Lexi was murdered at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Kimberly and Felix Rubio testified before the House Committee on Oversight and Reform. In their testimony, Lexi's mom Kimberly issued a prophetic warning. She said:

There's a mom listening to our testimony thinking, I can't imagine the pain that family is going through, not knowing that our pain will one day be their pain unless we do something.

While school massacres and other mass shootings tend to capture the Nation's attention, there are tens of thousands of Americans who die every year from the daily toll of gun violence, and many of these deaths barely make the news, they are so commonplace in modern America. They die in suicides, gun accidents—alone or in small groups—domestic disturbances, gang disputes, and crossfire.

There is no corner of the country that hasn't been impacted by the gun violence epidemic. Some of the politicians like to point and say: Oh, Chicago has got all of the problems. Sadly, that is not the case. We all face these problems. There are many so-called red States that vote on the other side politically that have terrible gunshot and violence statistics. It affects red States and blue States, big cities, suburbs, small towns, rural areas—you name it. America is awash in guns and gun violence.

So far this year in the city of Chicago, so far, 2,718 shootings have taken

place. According to the Chicago Sun-Times tracker, 88 of those killed by guns in Chicago this year were children.

Last Sunday, I was at a vigil in the Hyde Park section of Chicago at Augustana Lutheran Church. We come together each year to pray for an end to this gun violence, but we know in our heart of hearts that prayer is not enough. I believe the Good Lord expects us to pray but expects us to take action, too.

The Senate Judiciary Committee, which I chair, has held 11 hearings on gun violence in these last 2 years. We have heard from a lot of witnesses. One I remember was Ernest Willingham from the West Side of Chicago. After the Cabrini-Green housing project towers were torn down, Ernest and his family moved to the west side of town. Before he was 17, Ernest Willingham's father, brother, and cousin had all been shot. A few years ago, he lost his best friend to a stray bullet.

Despite the horror around him, Ernest became the first in his family to go to college. He is now a premed student at Northeastern University in Boston. He has been accepted to medical school.

Ernest said that when he grew up, young people “attend a lot more funerals than weddings,” and parents “live in constant fear that their [kid] will be the next” victim.

Since Sandy Hook, millions of Americans have advocated to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and people with mental instability and to protect their kids, but the gun lobby has worked to put more guns in more hands across America.

Many gun manufacturers and sellers have launched aggressive marketing campaigns for their deadly guns.

One of the more notorious ads showed a photo of an assault weapon—this is a military-style weapon—with the words under it “Consider your man card reissued.” The assault rifle in that ad is a Bushmaster XM-15, the same kind of semiautomatic assault rifle used to commit that mass murder at Sandy Hook Elementary School. “Consider your man card reissued.”

Another ad showed soldiers in combat with the words “Use what they use.” Use the same weapons that soldiers and marines use in combat, but use them here in America. The ad came from the company called Daniel Defense, the manufacturer of one of the semiautomatic assault rifles used to murder those 19 little kids and teachers in Uvalde.

It gets worse. AR-15s and AR-style weapons have become the weapons of choice for mass shooters.

This is an ad for a JR-15, a junior model of the AR-15. It is 20 percent smaller and lighter. It is designed for children—children—under the age of 18.

Look at the logos in this ad. I hope you can see it. They are also on the weapon. This gun manufacturer uses cartoon skulls sucking on pacifiers to

try to hook children on using military-style assault weapons.

If I made that statement without this ad, you would say: Durbin is making up a lie. That can't be true. They really want to sell these guns to adults to give to little kids, and they have them festooned with these images that children will find interesting?

On July 4 this year, a 21-year-old with a Smith & Wesson AR-15 military-style rifle went up on a rooftop during a Fourth of July parade in Highland Park, IL.

Now, Highland Park, IL, is one of these idyllic suburbs, a beautiful little place, wonderful families, a great community. And a Fourth of July parade is like a rite of passage. You take your kids out to see the flags, hear the bands, and enjoy every single moment of it.

This Fourth of July that we just witnessed was different. Up on top of the roof, he pulled out his AR-15. He fired off 83 rounds in less than a minute. Don't tell me about good shooters with guns, good guys with guns that stop bad guys. There were good guys with guns all over the place, in uniform, with firearms by their side. What could they do in the 60 seconds when he fired off 83 rounds? Nothing to stop him. That gunman killed seven people and injured dozens more.

Fourth of July parade, Highland Park, IL—he left a little 2-year-old boy, Aiden McCarthy, an orphan. He killed his mother and his father. He paralyzed an 8-year-old boy with a bullet that severed his spine.

The Fourth of July attack in Highland Park was the 309th mass shooting in America in 2022. Do you know how many we have had since the Fourth of July? We have gone from 309 on the Fourth of July to 627 mass shootings in the United States of America this year.

Not every shooting is committed with an assault weapon, but if a gunman wants to cause mass harm, assault weapons are the weapon of choice. And you ought to see, if you haven't already, the “60 Minutes” segment of what happens to the human body when it is hit with a bullet from one of these guns. It doesn't pass through neatly and cleanly. It does damage inside the body which is almost impossible to repair.

Doctors know the harm these bullets cause when they tear through the flesh. They don't just pierce bones and organs; they pulverize them.

I will make it clear: I support banning these military-style assault weapons from civilian use. We have banned them before, and I voted for that. It saved lives. It is time to ban them again.

Military assault weapons belong in the hands of the military, not in the hands of an 18- or 19-year-old on a roof in Highland Park, firing off 83 rounds in less than 60 seconds.

One other point: Federal law gives the firearms industry broad and unjustifiable immunity from civil liability. I am embarrassed to say that the

laws of the United States protect the manufacturers of these weapons from liability. There may be a way around that, and I hope there is. Firearm manufacturers should not have a license to recklessly peddle high-powered killing machines to those who shouldn't have them. They should be held accountable.

Every other product in America is held accountable. Why do guns get off the hook?

The brave families of Sandy Hook took assault weapon manufacturers to court for their marketing practices. The families prevailed, leading to a landmark settlement earlier this year.

Congress should do more to allow victims of gun violence and negligence to seek justice in our courts. If naming and shaming won't cause the gun industry to act responsibly, a day in court just might.

As we mark the grim anniversary of that devastating day 10 years ago in Newtown, CT, we have got to recommit ourselves to do more—more to protect our kids, more to prevent mass shootings, more to reduce the daily toll of shootings in our homes and neighborhoods. Our work is not done. Families across America are counting on us. Let's do something. Let's stop this carnage in America.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Oregon.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 4330

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, in a moment, I intend to put forward a unanimous consent request to pass my bipartisan bill with our colleague from Utah, Senator LEE, entitled the Protect Reporters from Excessive State Suppression Act, also known as the PRESS Act.

Before I make the unanimous consent request, I want to take just a few minutes to talk about why our colleague from Utah Senator LEE and I feel this legislation is so important, and I will start with the basic proposition behind the legislation.

If you don't have a free press, you don't have a democracy. My dad was a journalist. After fleeing the Nazis, he came to this country, taught himself English, worked in our Army developing propaganda that we dropped on the Nazis. He believed deeply in individual freedom and in press freedom and would always tell me: Ron, they go hand in hand.

If you want to see what happens when governments undermine and eliminate the free press, look at Russia, look at Saudi Arabia, look at Iran. Information became a tool of power, abuse, and manipulation. That is what governments do when they want to keep freedom from breaking out in their countries. And so they abuse power rather than promote education, expression, and enlightenment among the countryside and the people.

So—let's be clear—the threat of government overreach interfering with the free press in the United States is not some distant, far-off, hypothetical

idea. It happened very recently. The Trump administration spied on several journalists at outlets the disgraced ex-President personally disliked and attacked, grabbing phone and email records. The extent of this abuse of power has come out in shocking revelations over the last few years.

And let me emphasize, the Trump administration was not the first to do this sort of thing. Both the Trump administration and the Obama administration went too far in prosecuting journalists just for doing their jobs.

Now, Members of the Senate talk pretty frequently about their interest in protecting journalism in America. My view is the bipartisan PRESS Act is the best opportunity we have to make progress on that goal before the Congress ends—and we all hope that that is fairly shortly.

The PRESS Act would protect the free flow of information by shielding journalists from being ordered by the courts to give up their sources. The bill includes key exceptions, such as when that information is necessary to prevent an act of terrorism against the United States or necessary to prevent the threat of imminent violence. Those exceptions were very important to Senator LEE and me.

I see our colleague here from Arkansas. He and I serve on the Select Committee on Intelligence, so we know about the importance of protecting our country against terrorism.

This legislation is very similar to legislation already on the books in several States, including my home State of Oregon and Senator LEE's home State of Utah. It is our view, though, that these protections should extend from sea to shining sea in our great country.

Now, I will close by saying this is a proposal that brings both sides together. The House passed the PRESS Act a few months ago unanimously. And I think our colleagues would agree that sometimes these days it seems you can't get every Member of the House to even agree that there are 24 hours in a day and 7 days in a week, yet they passed our bill unanimously.

This is a can't-miss opportunity to protect the free press in America. It is good for the free flow of information. It is good for holding government accountable, and it is good for the democratic ideals on which this country was founded.

And I will just close by saying that if you read the writings of the Founding Fathers, it was almost as if they thought a free press was as important, if not more so, than government. That is how strongly they felt.

Let's pass this unanimous consent request when we make it, and let's send the PRESS Act to the President's desk today.

And I will now ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 4330 and that the Senate proceed to its immediate consider-

ation; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Is there objection?

Mr. COTTON. Mr. President.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

Mr. COTTON. Reserving the right to object—and I will—I want to make a few brief remarks here about why I object to the passage of this bill, the so-called PRESS Act, which would open a floodgate of leaks damaging to law enforcement and our Nation's security.

The press, unfortunately, has a long and sordid history of publishing sensitive information from inside the government that damages our national security. During the Vietnam war, the New York Times published the Pentagon Papers in an effort to demoralize the American people and turn them against the war effort.

During the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the press routinely revealed details about America's efforts to hunt down terrorists, details that helped our enemies cover their tracks and evade justice.

These leaks were reckless and harmful to our national security. Yet the PRESS Act would immunize journalists and leakers alike from scrutiny and consequences for their actions. This bill would prohibit the government from compelling any individual who calls himself a journalist from disclosing the source or substance of such damaging leaks.

This effectively would grant journalists special legal privileges to disclose sensitive information that no other citizen enjoys. It would treat the press as a special caste of crusaders for truth who are somehow set apart from their fellow citizens.

But that is not how the law historically has treated journalists. Our laws have always made clear that journalists can be held criminally liable for what they publish. In the Pentagon Papers case itself, a kind of holy grail for the liberal media, Justice White wrote the press is on "full notice of the position of the United States and must face the consequences if they publish" material damaging to our national security.

So while prior restraints were ruled out, consequences for violating the laws of our country remained necessary, and they remain necessary today as well because, moreover, if recent history has taught us anything, it is that too many journalists these days are little more than leftwing activists who are, at best, ambivalent about America and who are cavalier about our security and about the truth.

For instance, as the publisher of the New York Times during the Pentagon Papers case, Arthur "Punch" Sulzberger, wrote:

I am not sure that what we offer the Vietnamese peasant or what their own leaders offer them is any better than what the communists offer.

Think about that for a minute. The publisher of the New York Times, whose family still controls it today, couldn't see a difference between us—the United States—between Democratic Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Baines Johnson and Ho Chi Minh, a murderous, communist butcher. This is the kind of person we would be giving special legal privileges to that no other citizen enjoys.

Supporters of this bill insist that it is necessary to grant journalists this special kind of immunity in order to “preserve the free flow of information to the public.” But, of course, there are many legal avenues that whistleblowers can use to air their concerns about potential government misconduct.

In the executive branch, they can go to their Agency's inspector general. They can also go to the Office of Special Counsel, and, of course, they can go to the proper oversight committee here in Congress. Put differently, there is no shortage of legitimate and legal avenues for whistleblowers to unveil potential government misconduct. But this bill would allow any disgruntled bureaucrat, totally unaccountable to democratic processes, to circumvent these legitimate channels and go straight to the press, relying on the highly questionable judgment and unaccountable judgment of these bureaucrats and reporters alone to determine whether America's most sensitive secrets should be revealed.

And, finally, quite aside from all these grave concerns, this bill hasn't been through the Senate's usual process for debating and refining legislation. And, as I have explained, it shows. It hasn't been through regular order. There have been no hearings, no markups, or even a previous effort to pass the bill on the floor, to my knowledge.

This bill needs to be thoroughly vetted before we take such a drastic step to ensure that we don't open a floodgate of damaging leaks to our national security.

Therefore, Mr. President, I object.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I think the fact that there has been an objection here is very unfortunate. I am just going to briefly respond.

Our colleague from Arkansas has talked about the exceptions that are made in this bipartisan bill. And I would only say that the exceptions to make sure we can protect our country to deal with national security in this bill were strong enough to get the support of 435 Members of the House of Representatives.

I look at the President of the Senate, and he and I were in the other body. And sometimes, you would think you couldn't order a 7UP over there. But the fact is, it got the support of every Member of the House of Representatives—all 435—because they thought the exceptions made sense here.

Second, my colleague from Arkansas said that this was somehow giving special status—special protection—to the press in America. That is not accurate. This gives the press the kind of protection I believe the Founding Fathers would have supported because I have read their writings and saw what they had to say about the press and have already noted it.

And then our colleague seemed to make the case that this was somehow for liberal journalists—not for journalists for moderates and conservatives—for liberal journalists. The legislation extends to people in the press across the political spectrum. There are no special fast-track arrangements for people of one philosophy or another. And that was something that was especially important to me.

I mentioned in my remarks my dad, who fled the Nazis, taught himself English, and served in our Army. And he worked—particularly, after his service—writing historical nonfiction. He wrote a very important book about the Bay of Pigs where he highlighted what really happened. And what I enjoyed so much about my dad's book and what happened afterwards, the first person to call my dad, because, he said, Peter—my dad was Peter Wyden—you are writing the truth about what happened, was the late Congressman Henry Hyde of Illinois, one of the most conservative Members of the other body. And he and my dad struck up a fast friendship over the phone because they were interested in the facts. And that is what journalists do: They get the facts out.

So I think it is unfortunate there has been an objection here on all of these points. These issues were considered by the other body. And 435 Members of the other body said: This is important for our country. This is important for getting the facts out to the American people—unvarnished information, not information from the left, center, or right—unvarnished information.

I just want to close by saying we are going to be back on this floor. We are going to push this again and again and again because at a crucial time in America, where—and I mentioned this has not been relegated to one administration or another. This has been happening too often. It happens in any kind of administration, any philosophy. It is time to end it, and it is time to make sure that our free press is in a position to get the facts to the American people. We need this particular bipartisan effort, Senator LEE and I. And we will be back on this floor until we get it passed.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

S.J. RES. 60

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. Mr. President, today, my CRA on public charter schools is a simple vote today. It is a vote for common sense; it is a vote for parents; and it is a vote for kids.

Here is the truth: Everywhere in America, except for Washington, DC, this is an 80-percent issue. Literally, 68 percent of Democrats, 67 percent of Independents, 68 percent of African-Americans, and 72 percent of Hispanics all agree with some form of school choice. This is simply a public charter school issue stopping the Biden administration from destroying one of the most important vehicles for human prosperity for the kids of our country. I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I do know that lawmakers on both sides of the aisle support high-quality charter schools because they are an important part of many States' public school system, which is why I come to the floor today to urge my colleagues to vote against the resolution.

I want to be clear: This resolution will cause unnecessary chaos, undermine simple accountability measures to ensure that our Federal funds are well spent and delay funding from supporting new, high-quality charter schools and the students that they would serve.

Earlier this year, after responding to over 25,000 comments from charter schools, parent organizations, and others, the Biden administration issued their final rule laying out various criteria for Federal charter school grants. This is a common step in administering the charter school program—one the previous administration took as well. And the latest rule included some commonsense ideas to increase community and parent involvement, to strengthen the fiscal transparency to make sure that taxpayer dollars are being used properly.

The goal of the rule is simple: to help make sure our Federal dollars support high quality charter schools. Passing this resolution now would upend a balanced rule that is a result of months of careful work from the Department of Education.

The Biden administration has already used this rule to issue 12 awards now, totaling \$65 million across 11 States, and it is currently now in the middle of a grant competition, which charter school management organizations are now applying for.

So let's not disrupt the plans of Mississippi and Tennessee and Georgia and the other States that have already received awards under the new rule and that were counting on that funding. That is not fair. It is not good for schools, teachers, parents, or students.

So I hope no one here wants to see our schools disrupted, accountability

weakened, or learning undermined, which is why I am here today to urge everyone to join me in voting against this resolution and to work with me and the Department of Education to continue to support high-quality charter schools, while improving oversight and transparency of our Federal funds.

I yield the floor.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. I ask unanimous consent for another 30 seconds.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. This issue is an issue of America's future and America's now. Today, our kids desperately need quality education from sea to shining sea. This CRA provides us more momentum in the direction of making sure the poorest kids in the poorest ZIP Codes have quality education. That is all this is about.

I urge my colleagues to vote yes.

The joint resolution was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading and was read the third time.

VOTE ON S.J. RES. 60

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the bill having been read the third time, the question is, Shall the bill pass?

Mr. SCOTT of South Carolina. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Colorado (Mr. HICKENLOOPER) is necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senator is necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ).

The result was announced—yeas 49, nays 49, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 390 Leg.]

YEAS—49

Barrasso	Grassley	Risch
Blackburn	Hagerty	Romney
Blunt	Hawley	Rounds
Boozman	Hoeven	Rubio
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Burr	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Capito	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Cassidy	Kennedy	Shelby
Collins	Lankford	Sullivan
Cornyn	Lee	Thune
Cotton	Lummis	Tillis
Cramer	Marshall	Toomey
Crapo	McConnell	Tuberville
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Young
Fischer	Paul	
Graham	Portman	

NAYS—49

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Murphy
Bennet	Hassan	Murray
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Ossoff
Booker	Hirono	Padilla
Brown	Kaine	Peters
Cantwell	Kelly	Reed
Cardin	King	Rosen
Carper	Klobuchar	Sanders
Casey	Leahy	Schatz
Coons	Lujan	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Manchin	Shaheen
Duckworth	Markey	Sinema
Durbin	Menendez	Smith
Feinstein	Merkley	Stabenow

Tester	Warnock	Wyden
Van Hollen	Warren	
Warner	Whitehouse	

NOT VOTING—2

Cruz Hickenlooper

The joint resolution (S.J. Res. 60) was rejected.

(Mr. KAINE assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. SCHATZ assumed the Chair.)

(Ms. STABENOW assumed the Chair.)

(Mr. KAINE assumed the Chair.)

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KING). Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to consider the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Francisco O. Mora, of Florida, to be Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the Organization of American States, with the rank of Ambassador.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 1255, Elizabeth Frawley Bagley, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federative Republic of Brazil; that the Senate vote on the nomination without intervening action or debate; that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Elizabeth Frawley Bagley, of Florida, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federative Republic of Brazil.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Bagley nomination?

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President will be notified of the Senate's action.

The Senator from New Jersey.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2116

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, as in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2116 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration; further, that the bill be considered read a third time and passed on the motion.

Before I do this, sir, I would like to just read a brief statement if I may, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Proceed.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I am really proud to be New Jersey's junior Senator. Even more so, I am proud that I have called Newark my home for most of my adult life. I can talk about my community for weeks on end. I know the Presiding Officer has heard me talk about Newark for some time.

It is an incredible community where we do not mistake wealth with worth. We know the value of goodness and decency. And a lot of members of my community in the city of Newark are Black and Brown folks, and the special relationship they often have to their hair denotes deep cultural traditions. You go to my city right now, and you will find hairstyles of different types: locks, cornrows, twists, braids, bantu knots, and, of course, what I once had, Mr. President, afros.

You will find barber shops and hair salons aplenty that are dedicated to the upkeep of these beautiful hairstyles. One of my favorite things to do is to go to barber shops to sit in community with folks and connect.

I can write almost a dissertation probably, sir, right now about the role of barber shops in Black and Brown communities. They are incredible community cultural convening places.

But I also want to say that it is not always a source of joy. At times, the conversation has turned to a deep source of hurt and pain. There is a decades-long problematic practice of discrimination against natural hair in this country.

It was brought to the forefront in 2018 when a New Jersey student named Andrew Johnson was forced to cut his dreadlocks in the middle of a wrestling match. The entire ordeal was caught on camera. And as the scissors were brought out to cut Andrew's hair, you can see the deep hurt and pain on the face of this young man. It is the pain felt by many, traumatic at times, of hurtful experiences that make you question your very belonging in a community—the beauty of your hair, its natural style, your immutable characteristics, your cultural beliefs, your connection to your heritage.

No person in America should have to deal with this pain, and that is why I stand here today, urging this body to pass legislation that is dear to my community's heart, dear to communities all across the country. It is named the Creating a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act, otherwise known as the CROWN Act.

This bill is ultimately a matter of justice. Hair discrimination is real. It is a continuing and a pernicious problem for Black and Brown people in our country. It can lead to lost employment opportunities. It can lead to violations of students' civil rights. In short, it forces people to change parts of their very being so as to avoid harassment or punishment.

A recent study from Michigan State University found that Black women are 50 percent more likely to be sent home